

*THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF THE LIFE OF
CHRIST.*

The Gospel in the Gospels, by W. P. Du Bose, S.T.D., Professor of Exegesis in the University of the South (U.S.A.). Longmans, 1906.—From time to time *alumni* of the University of the South find their way to Oxford. And I have noticed about them, that they speak with even more than the usual veneration of their University and of its home at Sewanee in the State of Tennessee—planted on a high plateau more than 2,000 feet above the sea and breaking downwards in picturesque ravines and gullies. The University has no millionaire behind it, like so many of the great institutions of the Western Republic. To all appearance ruined soon after its foundation by the Civil War, and a gradual growth from small beginnings, it yields to none of its wealthier and more imposing competitors in the affectionate reverence of its sons. Indeed there has always seemed to me to be a peculiar quality about this reverence, such as we, on this side the Atlantic, are accustomed to see in those poorer bodies that have about them some special touch of romance.

Sewanee to its votaries is a kind of Mecca, and it has its prophet—a living prophet—in Dr. W. P. Du Bose, the Dean of its Theological Faculty, who is a real sage and seer.

I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Du Bose—not for the first time, for we had made acquaintance some ten or eleven years before in Oxford—under the hospitable roof of the Editor of *The Churchman*. We had several strolls together

along the lovely shores of Long Island ; and I found in him a seer of the cultivated, quiet, homely kind, not without the charms of that self-forgetfulness which is permitted to thinkers, and with absolute singleness of aim. Dr. Du Bose, as might be inferred from his name, is of French extraction. He told me that in a long line of ancestry there was only one British name—that of a Scottish Sinclair. And yet in spite of this descent, he said, “ I’m English all over.” Needless to add, we struck an alliance on the spot. Dr. Du Bose’s ancestry had been loyalists in the War of Independence. He himself, as a young man, had fought in the ranks of the Confederates, had been badly wounded and taken prisoner, and reported dead, and had then taken an active and devoted part both in the literal and the moral rebuilding of Sewanee.

I.

There were all the materials here for casting a horoscope ; and in addition, I had—and ought to have had still more—the advantage afforded by earlier works, *The Soteriology of the New Testament* (1892), and *The Ecumenical Councils*, (2nd edition 1897) ; and yet I do not think that I quite expected all that I find in this new book, *The Gospel in the Gospels*.

I will say what is in my mind at once : it is just the kind of book that English-speaking Christianity is wanting ! The world is always in want of a prophet—we at this moment are specially in want of a prophet—and here is one !

Let me try to describe what the character of the book is.

In the first place, as to style and manner. Curiously enough, as I think over the book, there rise irresistibly to my mind two passages of Wordsworth that may well seem far remote from its subject. One is from the “ Poet’s Epitaph.”

But who is this, with modest looks
And clad in homely russet brown ? . . .

Not that I would suggest any defect of clerical costume ; there was no such defect. And if the author is a poet, he is so most unconsciously. There are certainly none of the airs and graces of a poet. That is really the esoteric meaning of the "russet brown." The book shows a quite perceptible neglect—I had almost said impatience, if Dr. Du Bose could ever be impatient—of the ordinary little literary conventions. There is hardly a reference all through the book. There are no inverted commas for quotations. Every now and then a sentence reads rather awkwardly ; sometimes it will not construe at all. Dr. Du Bose shares with some of his countrymen a certain readiness in coining new words, about which we on this side the Atlantic should have some scruple : "reportorial" (pp. 8, 131), "immanental" (p. 47), "righteousing" (in the sense of "making righteous" or "investing with the character of righteousness," p. 123).

But we feel, as we read, that these are the merest trivialities, which come quite as much from the total absence of literary vanity as from anything else. Really, the style and matter fit each other admirably. Dr. Du Bose is dealing with lofty, and by no means easy and obvious themes ; he is obliged to repeat the same abstract thought many times throughout his book ; and yet he never seems in want of an apt and aptly varied expression. There is no real obscurity ; if any reader finds any part of the book obscure, the fault is probably in himself ; perhaps it is too much to expect that all the world should breathe freely at such altitudes. To clothe in grave and suitable words so much deep thinking is no small achievement. The book bears a stamp of its own, it is one that no one else could have written.

The other Wordsworthian echo that comes to me arises out of the subject matter and mode of treatment.

When with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

The one slight change that has to be made here is that we must substitute some more sober word for "joy." Not that it was possible to write such a book without an inward emotion closely akin to joy. If a note of elation had broken through now and then, no one would have been surprised. It is sheer simplicity, sincerity and self-restraint. We are reminded of Lamb.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool.

Dr. Du Bose is not at all a Quaker, but he has something of the admirable calm which we associate with that body. The colour of his book is grey, though we might well expect the imagination that is at work in it to make its glow felt and seen through the pages. That it should do this so little is a mark of strength—of the same quiet unconscious strength that is the dominant quality throughout. I hope, if all's well, before I have done, to give an example of the highest point of dithyrambic eloquence to which the book attains. Even that I think will be pronounced sober enough.

To sum up this descriptive part of my notice. It is a strong, grave, penetrating book, that would be austere if the thought were not too rich and deep and elevating for austerity.

But I must not forget that I have not even yet explained the purpose of the book and the place that it holds in literature. It is not a Life of Christ, and yet we shall perhaps understand its object best if we compare it with Lives of Christ. We have had these of various kinds: we have had picturesque Lives, and we have had learned Lives. *The*

Gospel in the Gospels does not aim at being either. It is indeed potentially more learned than it may seem. One whose own work is concerned with the same subject can read between the lines ; he can see more knowledge of the modern treatment of it than is allowed to appear. Dr. Du Bose is in truth entirely modern. But the distaste for details of which we have spoken limits the influence of this to results ; it does not let us see the process that leads to the results.

Dr. Du Bose calls his book *The Gospel in the Gospels*. It is not a complete picture of the Life of Christ. It is not an attempt to place that picture in its historical setting. In other words, it is not an attempt to reproduce and modernize the substance of the Gospels, so far as that substance is capable of being presented as it were visibly to the eye of the mind. But it is rather a sustained endeavour to get at the inner spiritual meaning that lies behind all such external presentation. It is a high and serious effort to determine the principles at work in the Life of Christ, to express them in the most compact and abstract form, and to view them in their inner coherence and mutual relations. We might call this a *philosophy* of the Life of Christ : it belongs throughout to the region of philosophy, or philosophical theology, as opposed to that of history or criticism.

It might be expected that there would be some difficulty in delimiting the two spheres, some confusion of their natural boundaries. As a rule this has been avoided very successfully ; the book is a complete and rounded whole, with its outline well defined. There is only just one single case that I am inclined to think of as an exception. The Temptation of our Lord seems to me best treated historically, in relation to the recasting of the Messianic idea. I cannot help thinking it rather artificial to bring the three temptations under the heads respectively of Faith, Hope and Love. I cannot

remember anything else in the book to which I could give such an epithet ; but it seems to me in this instance due to the cause I have mentioned, the attempt to bring under philosophical or theological categories a problem that is primarily historical.

II.

The book, as I have already said, is planned in three main divisions : considering, (1) the Earthly Life of our Lord ; (2) His Work ; (3) His Person. This three-fold division is the carrying out of a very interesting principle laid down in the Preface. Dr. Bu Bose is very sympathetic towards modern thought ; he feels that, in view of the present position, a different attitude is advisable from that which was characteristic of early Christianity. The early Christians held that truth is a whole, and that anything that came short of full truth was by that very fact condemned and excluded. Dr. Du Bose, on the other hand, holds that even partial truth is true as far as it goes—" that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is so true and so living in every part that he who truly possesses and truly uses any broken fragment of it may find in that fragment something—just so much—of gospel for his soul and of salvation for his life." In pursuance of this principle the argument works its way upwards : first, through the lower stage of the earthly life of Christ, His common humanity with ours, considered as such ; then, through the contemplation of His Work, as centring in the Resurrection ; and so lastly to " the gospel of the Person or the Incarnation."

I am not quite sure that this scheme is altogether a success. I am much inclined to go with the principle from which it starts ; and the first part seems to me really to form a rounded whole. But I am not so clear that a dividing line can be drawn, in the same sense, between the second

and the third. I doubt if we can frame an adequate appreciation of the Work of Christ apart from presuppositions derived from our estimate of His Person. I may even go further than this, and raise the question whether it is possible to attach any special value, such as Christians attach, to the Work of Christ without bringing in the higher Christian conception of His Person.

I have therefore a little wondered how far the leading idea of the Preface may have been an after-thought. But, however that may be, the real evolution of the book is less materially affected than we might perhaps at the first blush have supposed that it would be. There is indeed, as I have implied, a certain amount of inevitable anticipation of the later stages in the earlier; but this is not at all excessive, and the natural upwards progression of the thought is not much disturbed.

Part I., which stands by itself more distinctly than the other two, deals in succession with, The Impression of the Earthly Life of Jesus (chap. i.); The Growth and Preparation of Jesus (ii.); The Divine Sonship of Humanity (iii.); The Son of Man (iv.); The Kingdom of God (v.); The Authority of Jesus (vi.); The Blessedness of Jesus (vii.); The Beatitudes (viii., ix.); The Death of Jesus (x.).

As I do not propose to return to this division of the book, I will give a single specimen to show what it is like. The passage is interesting, because it rather markedly—but I suspect quite independently—coincides with much that is being said in quarters very far distant from Sewanee. There is a tendency “in the air” at the present time to qualify the old conception of meekness.

Men, according to Aristotle, in the spirit and temper of their dealings with one another, should be controlled by a disposition which he calls meekness or mildness or gentleness. The term is the best we have, he says, but it is inadequate, it is not positive or strong enough. Moses stands out as the type of the Hebrew righteousness;

he might be said to have been the creator of it. And we speak of the meekness of Moses as though that were his distinguishing trait. But surely we have all felt the inadequacy of the term meekness to express the character or disposition of Moses. Our Lord seems to have selected the same term to express His own fundamental disposition. Take my yoke upon you, He says, and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly in heart ; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. And yet we too feel that the word meek is scarcely the one to describe Jesus. We feel even that too much application of that term to Him has weakened the popular conception not only of Himself but of Christianity. It has contributed perhaps to the too negative and colorless interpretation of His great principle of non-resistance. . . . In the co-called meekness of Moses there is a lofty unselfishness, a great humility, a perfection of zeal and devotion, which momentary weakness and impatiences scarcely detract from. The Law and the Prophets between them were productive of great types. But the perfection of human spirit and temper waited still for its realization and manifestation. When Jesus speaks of the meek, He speaks of Himself. He speaks of that attitude towards men under all possible conditions of provocation and trial which He had deliberately made His own and which never deserted Him under any temptation to the contrary. . . . I do not know how we can define or describe in abstract terms the peculiar meekness, or what is attempted to be expressed by the meekness of Jesus. *The thing is ever more and greater, and even different, from its best expression.* That is why God never gives us definitions or descriptions of things, but always manifestations of the thing itself. . . . But the interesting point about the beatitude is this : the perfect assurance of Jesus that the right, the true attitude of man toward man will be the ultimately successful and surviving attitude. The meek shall inherit and possess the earth. The spirit and temper and disposition of Jesus, because it is the fittest, because it is that which alone gives true meaning and value to life, because it is the only bond of perfect relationship and intercourse among men, will survive and prevail. (pp. 99-103.)

It would be too bad to call attention by italics to one of the few sentences here and there that do not construe ("greater . . . from"), but I do so really for another purpose, as an instance of the wise incidental sayings that are scattered far more freely over Dr. Du Bose's pages. We shall come across others in the sequel.

The passage as a whole may be taken as a good average

sample of the freshness and originality with which Dr. Du Bose writes. But we go to him especially as a philosophic theologian on a large scale ; and it is to this aspect of his book that I shall confine myself henceforward.

III.

It is just a full *lustrum* since it fell to me in THE EXPOSITOR for May 1901 to review my dear friend Dr. Moberly's *Atonement and Personality*. I was led to say of it that it was long since I had seen a book that gave one so much the impression of having been really *thought out*. It was neither more nor less than a system of theology complete in itself. I should now say just the same thing of *The Gospel in the Gospels*. And—what is still more remarkable—not only is this too a real system, completely articulated in itself, but it is practically the very same system. Rarely can it happen that two writers, at a distance of some five thousand miles from each other and brought up in circumstances entirely different, each following the train of his own thought and without any direct communication, should arrive at results so nearly identical. I know that Dr. Moberly had read an earlier book by Dr. Du Bose ; and I believe—though I am not sure—that Dr. Du Bose is acquainted with the writings of Dr. Moberly. But I am convinced that in neither case does this fact, so far as it is a fact, at all impair the originality of the development. Both are eminently logical writers ; and their logic—the logic of no sudden impulse but of a lifetime—has led them from the same premises, by the same method, to the same conclusions.

This is very conspicuous over the whole of the ground covered by Dr. Moberly's volume, which (as I have said) was remarkably comprehensive. The whole theory of

Personality, and the whole theory of Atonement in the two books coincide.

Dr. Moberly, it will be remembered, put forward a view of Personality that seemed to many paradoxical. He held that true freedom of the will consisted, not in the licence of doing simply what one pleased, but in the gradual conforming of the human will to the Divine. He held also that the perfecting of the Self is not to be had in distinctness or isolation, but by the permeating and penetration of the human spirit by the Spirit of God. Both these fundamental thoughts appear repeatedly in Dr. Du Bose.

The American scholar insists quite as strongly as the English that the real atonement or reconciling of man to God can only be completely brought about by this action of the Holy Ghost. As Dr. Du Bose puts it :

It is not the Gospel nor the kingdom of God nor salvation to men that they shall be made the *objects only* of all the mercy and the goodness of the universe. Nothing can be done merely to us or for us that will save us. To be loved, to be sympathized with and helped, to be shown mercy and forgiven, to be the objects of the most unconditional divine grace, are a very great deal. But these are the merest circumstances of human salvation, they are not salvation itself. No one saw more clearly than our Lord that life and blessedness is not in what is done to us, but only in what we ourselves are and do. . . . Therefore, Jesus quickly and decisively passes from the consideration of men as the mere recipients or objects of the goodness of God, of which He was the almoner, to the highest thought of them as the subjects of the divine goodness, as partakers and sharers of the divine spirit and nature and life of love and goodness. (p. 66.)

Not less uncompromising is the following :

All the reality in the universe can be no Gospel to us so long as it remains objective, or until it enters into living relation with ourselves. Of course, it can never so enter unless there is in us the natural potentiality of entering into relation with it. But equally certainly that potentiality can only be actualized by ourselves. What is necessary within ourselves to give effect to all that is true without us is a corresponding response, or a response of correspondence, on our part. That correspondence is, I repeat,

not a fact of natural relationship, but an act of spiritual communication or self-impartment. When the Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are sons of God, it is not only God who communicates the gracious fact, but it is God who awakens the humble and grateful response, and puts it into our heart to say, *Abba, Father*. . . . It is through this eternal Spirit, which is God's and Christ's and ours, that we pass from ourselves into Christ and through Christ into God. (p. 286 f.)

It will be seen that the whole conception of Atonement or reconciliation is worked out essentially on the lines of *Romans vi*. The death of Christ upon the Cross was a death to sin, and to all that gave sin its hold upon humanity. But this death to sin had in it an inclusive virtue; it is an act in which every Christian is called upon and is enabled to share. The medium of this enabling is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, through which the believer is made one with Christ, so that he both dies with Him and also rises again with Him to newness of life.

All this is strictly based upon the teaching of *St. Paul*. But it is a satisfaction to see that the interpretation of that teaching is not so one-sided as it often is. There are some writers who, in laying stress upon *Romans vi*., seem to think that they can afford to neglect or forget *Romans iii*. *Dr. Du Bose* does not do this. He is careful to balance one side of his teaching with the other.

Remission, or the putting away, of sin, includes two ideas, or perhaps more correctly two stages of the same idea. It means a real putting away by the New Testament process of sanctification. But it also means the provisional putting away by the equally New Testament act of divine pardon or forgiveness. Each of these two conceptions plays an important part in the drama of redemption or final deliverance and freedom from sin. And the complete meaning of each and perfect relating of both is no small part of New Testament doctrine. (p. 132.)

This other half of the process is elsewhere explained quite clearly and satisfactorily :

Here comes in the other sense of remission, not as yet the complete impartation, but already the perfect imputation to us of the whole holiness, righteousness, and life of God as realized for us in Jesus Christ. The moment a human life has really made Jesus Christ its *end*, although that end be as yet only the end of purpose, and infinitely not yet the end of attainment, that moment God imputes to that life what it means and intends as though it had already accomplished it. St. Paul perfectly caught the principle, and perfectly expressed it in the doctrine which is the root of his system: Faith is imputed to us for righteousness; it is reckoned or accounted as being righteousness. (p. 153.)

It is the difference between the ideal and the actual, the beginning of a Christian's career and the end. That St. Paul should insist so strongly on this initial imperfect and anticipatory stage is due to the fact that we are most of us so much nearer to this stage than we are to the other. For us the process of dying to sin by repentance, of throwing ourselves into the work of Christ by faith, the struggle to keep ourselves from falling back, must needs take precedence of that perfecting of holiness, which will never be complete on this side the grave. In practice we are obliged to start from the actual, and to look at things as they are; but it is a great help to us in theory to look at the process as a whole, to see it not in the light of our weak and uncertain efforts, but as it is consummated through Christ in God.

IV.

The reader who is familiar with Dr. Moberly's great work will be constantly reminded of it in all that is said by Dr. Du Bose on the double subject of "Atonement and Personality." The fundamental lines of thought are the same; and they are laid down with equal firmness and lucidity. But the resemblance between the two books is very far from ending here. I have spoken of both as containing what is really little short of a complete system of theology; and

they might be described as almost doubles, one of the other, over the whole field. It would be really an excellent exercise to read the two books side by side ; they will be constantly found to illustrate and supplement each other. Sometimes Dr. Du Bose states his thought with unusual boldness of concrete expression : but the logic of both writers is equally rigorous and essentially the same ; and it is sometimes helpful to look for the premises in the one of the conclusions that are found in the other.

I will presently try to illustrate this. But the last division of Dr. Du Bose's book is so broad and so strong, and I may add so valuable, as a survey of the root ideas of Christian theology that I shall take advantage of it to give examples of the treatment of some difficult questions where its help seems to me specially welcome.

I will take first what is said about the mystery of our Lord's Birth. The extract will be rather long, but I only wish that it could be longer still ; I cannot find in my heart to abridge it further.

While the order of things in themselves is always forward, the order of thought about things is backward, so that our last knowledge is that of adequate or sufficient causes. So Christianity may have rested for a moment upon the spiritual endowment of Jesus, as covered by His baptism or anointing with the Holy Ghost from heaven. But not for long ; the explanation was inadequate ; it was impossible to see in Jesus only a man approved of God by mighty works and wonders and signs. The deeper question of His person could not but follow after the others and gradually work its way to the front. . . . It says nothing about the Gospel of the infancy as a direct naïve record of facts, to recognize a more or less conscious or unconscious reason or motive for its introduction. It answered the immediate direct purpose of denying the human paternity of Jesus, and affirming for Him a divine paternity. When we speak, as we shall, of the motive or purpose in this, it is unnecessary to think of an explicit conscious intention on the part of the writers or of the Church. The truth shapes itself instinctively in the mind and expression of men, so that we often do not know why or how we say the things that are truest.

I cannot help pausing for a moment to point out once more what a number of wise sayings the passage I have been quoting contains, which are general in their bearing, and not confined to the particular topic under discussion. It is a real sage and seer who is speaking.

There is no part of the Gospels that has quite the poetic elevation of the Gospel of the Infancy. And yet what, at the last, one is most impressed with is its spiritual truth; if there is not the true instinct of the spirit there, in thought and language, it is nowhere to be found. Now what instinct of truth was it that in this effective way shaped the faith of the Gospel to the affirmation of not a human but a divine paternity of our Lord? I venture to say, that at any living point or period of Christianity the Christian consciousness concerning Jesus Christ would instinctively and necessarily have come to the practical conclusion embodied in the artless and poetical stories of the birth and infancy of Jesus. The profound speculative question really though invisibly at issue in and decided by them is this: Who and What is Jesus Christ, in His real and essential personality? The answer which this artless, and yet most profoundly artful, so-called nursery myth forestalls and excludes is this, He was no [?] mere natural offspring of Joseph and Mary. Why not? Because the product of every such natural union is an individual human person. Viewing Jesus Christ in that light it is impossible to construe Him otherwise than as a human individual, exceptionally favored by unique relations with God. The question for the Church then, as for the Church now or at any time, is, Can we, in the light of all that Jesus Christ is to the Church and to humanity, His universality, sufficiency, and ubiquity, can we, I say, be fully and finally satisfied to see in Him only one of the sons of men peculiarly favored and most highly endowed? I must confess for one, that however confronted and impressed with the rational and natural difficulties which we are about to meet in the opposite view, it is equally impossible for me not to be a Christian, or to be one under the conception of such a manhood of Jesus as the above. And I believe that in so saying I am expressing the normal Christian instinct and experience of the world. (pp. 211-213.)

It goes without saying that this conception of a humanity which is not that of an individual man is difficult. To understand it at all we need to bring in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Moberly warns us that the relation of Christ to the race "was not a differentiating, but a consummating

relation. He was not generically, but inclusively, man." (*A. and P.* p. 86). The medium of this inclusiveness is the Spirit. It is through the Spirit of the Incarnate that the effects of the Incarnation are diffused among men.

The nearest analogy is that of Adam—"the First Man" of 1 Corinthians xv. 47. But Dr. Moberly points out that the comparison is far from adequate.

It is valid as an illustration, but remains on a different, and dissimilar, level. The one is a fleshly relation, the other a spiritual. The one works automatically, materially, mechanically. The other is realized in a different sphere, and depends upon other than material conditions. The one is a natural property of bodily life, and follows, as it were blindly, from the fact that Adam was the original parent. The other is a Spiritual property, so sovereign, so transcendent, that it could only be a property of a Humanity which was not merely the Humanity of a finite creature, but the Humanity of the infinite God. (*Op. cit.* p. 89.)

This last phrase ("the Humanity of the infinite God") is one that would be entirely endorsed by Dr. Du Bose.

While I believe that there was nothing revealed or manifested to us in Jesus Christ, save the perfection of His humanity, yet I equally believe that in that perfection there was infinitely more than the humanity so perfected. In other words, I see in Jesus not only the supreme act of humanity in God, but the supreme act also of God in humanity. (*G. in GG.* p. 213.)

Nothing is more characteristic than the even way in which these two complementary predications are balanced and the thoroughgoing unhesitating logic with which both are asserted. Occasionally we meet with expressions which would be almost startling, if they were taken out of their context. For instance this :

Our Lord did not do that in our nature which no man within the limits of his own nature or by the exercise of only his own powers is capable of doing. He was not holy by nature, nor righteous by the law. The impossibilities of humanity were as much impossibilities for Him as for us. He bare all our weaknesses and carried all our sorrows. He had as much to hunger and thirst after a righteousness

which was not His own as we have, and He did it infinitely more. If He was actually holy and righteous as none but He was or is, it was because He was possessed, and humanly possessed of a higher secret, a truer way, a more sufficient power, of human holiness and righteousness than human nature in itself contains or human will can by itself acquire. . . . He was holy as a man and in the only way in which a man can be holy. He was holy by the conquest of sin. And this He was and did, as we too must be and do, after Him and in Him,—not within the limits of our own nature, nor by the powers of our own will (and yet not without these too), but through His all-sufficient way of perfect union and unity with God. (p. 163 f.)

This is one of the instances in which, though Dr. Moberly does not (I believe) use quite the same language, he yet explains the principle on which it is used.

Christ is, then, not so much God and man, as God in, and through, and as, man. He is one indivisible personality throughout. In His human life on earth, as Incarnate, He is not sometimes, but consistently, always, in every act and every detail, Human. The Incarnate never leaves His Incarnation. God, as man, is always, in all things, God *as man*. He no more ceases, at any point, to be God under methods and conditions essentially human; than, under these essentially human methods and conditions, He at any point ceases to be God. Whatever the reverence of their motive may be, men do harm to consistency and to truth, by keeping open, as it were, a sort of non-human sphere, or aspect, of the Incarnation. This opening we should unreservedly desire to close. There are not two existences either of or within, the Incarnate, side by side with one another. If it is all Divine, it is all human too. We are to study the Divine, in and through the human. By looking for the Divine side by side with the human, instead of discerning the Divine within the human, we miss the significance of them both. (*A. and P.* p. 96 f.)

The American and the English scholar are quite at one on this ground. As a rule they both keep closely to the lines of patristic divinity. This is eminently the case with regard to their teaching as to the nature of the humanity assumed by Christ. Dr. Du Bose more than once quotes Irenæus; and he has striking points of contact with the teaching of that father, and of St. Athanasius. But in the extracts just given there is a perceptible difference from the doctrine of

the Two Natures, as it is given (e.g.) in the Letter of Pope Leo to Flavian.

I have the impression that in this respect the moderns have really improved upon the ancients. The consequences of this re-statement are rather far-reaching. One of these may be seen in a passage by Dr. Du Bose, which is as near to a climax as anything in the book. But I will quote first a later passage, which serves to explain the earlier.

The hesitation and reluctance to see all God, and highest God, not only in the humanity but in the deepest human humiliation of Jesus Christ, *is part of the disposition to measure exaltation by outward circumstance and condition instead of by inward quality and character.* We find it impossible to recognize or acknowledge God in the highest act of His highest attribute. We cannot listen to the thought that it is with God as it is with us, that it only is with us because it is with God, that self-humiliation is self-exaltation. (p. 284.)

That is a kind of boldness that I do not think we should have found in any of the ancients. And I cannot help thinking that it is superior to the Kenotic teaching of many moderns. At any rate the application of it which follows is deeply impressive.

We speak of the incredible and impossible self-lowering or self-emptying of God in becoming man or in undergoing the death of the cross. Is the act in which love becomes perfect a contradiction or a compromise of the divine nature? Is God not God or least God in the moment in which He is most love? Where before Christ, or otherwise than in Christ, in whom He humbled Himself to become man, and then humbled Himself with and in man to suffer what man must needs suffer in order to become what God would fain make him—and the highest and best that even God can make him—I say where before Christ, or where now otherwise than in Christ and in the cross of the divine suffering together with and for man, where in all the story of the universe was or is love so love, or God so God! (p. 272 f.)

V.

I hope it will not be thought that I have been too copious in quotations. I have been very anxious to let Dr. Du Bose

speak—and speak adequately—for himself. I desire to give my readers an idea of what his book really is. I have the feeling that a few samples, which are really characteristic, will be better than much description, even if I could trust myself to describe with sufficient accuracy. And I did not consider myself called upon to resist the temptation to place a great English book by the side of a great American. The epithet is one that I will take the risk of giving to both.

At the same time my readers will kindly remember that what I have given them has been only samples. Dr. Du Bose's book is full of good things at which I have been unable even to hint. To do it justice, it should be read carefully, and read through, from beginning to end. If the specimens I have given should arouse in any one the instinct of opposition; that may be perhaps partly because I have given prominence to what lay most outside the beaten track. But the reader may be assured that there is a great deal beside this which is said with admirable freshness and force.

But the thing that perhaps strikes me most in the book is the wholly unconscious (i.e. un-selfconscious) loftiness and largeness of the point of view. The work is that of a serenely contemplative mind—a mind that has fixed a long and steady gaze upon its great theme until the outlines stood out luminous and clear. The writer of this book has had the whole of Christianity before him. Like Jacob at Peniel, he has wrestled with its meaning, not excitedly or passionately, but “in the quietness of thought”; and his patience has had its reward.

I will just give a last illustration of the largeness and comprehensiveness of view of which I have spoken. We might call it nothing less than a definition of Christianity.

I would describe Christianity in its largest sense to be the fulfilment of God in the world through the fulfilment of the world in God.

This assumes that the world is completed in man, in whom also God is completed in the world. And so, God, the world, and man are at once completed in Jesus Christ—who, as He was the *logos* or thought of all in the divine foreknowledge of the past, so also is He the *telos* or end of all in the predestination of the future. That is to say, the perfect psychological, moral, and spiritual manhood of which Jesus Christ is to us the realization and the expression is the end of God in creation, or in evolution. I hold that neither science, philosophy, nor religion can come to any higher or other, either conjecture or conclusion, than that. (p. 274.)

When we have thus adequately conceived Christ as the universal truth and reality of ourselves, and in ourselves of all creation, and in creation and ourselves of God, then we are prepared for the conclusion that we know God at all, or are sons to Him as our Father, or are capable in that relation of partaking of His nature or entering into His Spirit or living His life, only in and through Jesus Christ; because Jesus Christ is the incarnation or human expression to us of the whole *Logos* of God—that is to say, of God Himself as in any way whatever knowable or communicable. (p. 279.)

We may turn this round and express it, no longer in the terms of reasoned theory, but in those of religious experience, as follows :

Jesus Christ has not come so much to create the kingdom of God without us, as to create within us the power to see it. I am come, He says, that they which see not may see. What He saw and what He would have us see is : all the eternal love that God the Father is, *ours* ; all the infinite grace that God the Son is, *ours* ; all the perfect fellowship or oneness with ourselves that God the Holy Ghost is, *ours*. If all this is *ours*, then all things are *ours*, and all blessedness is indeed *ours*. (p. 96.)

It would not be easy to end on a more characteristic or a finer note than that.

W. SANDAY.